Closing of MECL Regional Office at Calcutta

3626. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a move to close down the regional office of the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited in Calcutta;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (c) Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) has no Regional Office at Calcutta. However, one of the five Area Offices of the Company is located at Calcutta, the other four being at Nagpur, Hyderabad, Ranchi and Jaipur. The Committees constituted by the Government of India to suggest measures for revival of MECL has, inter-alia, recommended that in order to restructure the Organisation in a two-tier system as against three-tier structure, as a first step, all Area Offices should be closed and Project Managers should report directly to the headquarter. This recommendation of the Committee has not been implemented so far, although some staff redeployment in Area Offices has been effected on administrative grounds.

Role of Central Government in the Award of Mining Contracts in States

3627. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reaction/stand of Government towards recent decision of Madhya Pradesh Government to permit a private company to excavate and process diamond of Devbhog diamond mines in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether the Central Government have any role to play in such deals;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how does the Central Government propose to play the prescribed role?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (d) Mineral concessions are granted by the concerned State Governments in accordance with provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, and the rules made thereunder. The Act also provides that in respect of any mineral specified in the Ist Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, no prospecting licence or mining lease shall be granted except with the previous approval of the Central Govt. "Diamonds" are covered under the aforesaid Ist Schedule of the Act.

As per information furnished by the State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, offers were invited by Madhya Pradesh State Mining Corporation on behalf of the Madhya Pradesh Govt. from Indian citizens and Companies registered in India for prospecting, mining and marketing of diamonds available in 11 Blocks of the state viz Angora block, Majhgaon block, Paharikhera block, Ib-Maini block, Sarangarh block, Pithora block, Behradih block, Kanker Keshkal block, Narainpur Lanjora block, Chhota Dongar block and Tokapal block, each block covering an area of around 4500 to 5000 Sq. Kms. The following four companies submitted their offers:—

1. M/s. National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. Hyderabad (For (1) Pithora Block (2) Kanker-Keshkal Block (3) Chhota Dongar Block (4) Tokapal Block (5) Narainpur-Lanjora Block, & (6) Behradih Block.)

2. M/s. Adamas India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi (For Behradih Block only)